



Unit 62 – If..not & Unless; If & Whether (*If it doesn't rain today.. Unless it rains today..*)

A) Unless has a similar meaning to 'if not' and can be used instead of 'if not' in certain conditional sentences.

-> We'll go to the beach tomorrow **unless** it rains. *'..tomorrow if it doesn't rain.'*

-> You'll be unhappy **unless** you break up with him. *'..if you don't break up with him.'*

Note that the above examples refer to the future. However, the verb after unless is in the present tense.

Unless can also be followed by i) a present tense, ii) a past tense, or iii) a past perfect tense verb. For example:

-> i) You won't get the grades you want **unless** you review daily.

-> ii) He wouldn't be in such good shape **unless** he had a strict diet.

-> iii) I wouldn't have signed the contract **unless** I'd had a lawyer present.

Unless + Present Tense (Type 1 Conditional):

You'll feel better tomorrow if you go to bed early. You won't feel better tomorrow unless you go to bed early.

Unless + Past Tense (Type 2 Conditional):

I wouldn't go to the event if you told me not to. I wouldn't go to the event unless you told me to.

Unless + Past Perfect Tense (Type 3 Conditional):

I wouldn't have called him if you hadn't suggested it. I wouldn't have called him unless you had suggested it.

B) However, we use *if..not but not unless* in the following contexts:

i) in the main clause we say that an action/event in the if-clause is unexpected:

-> **If** Jordan doesn't come to the party, I'll be surprised. *not: 'Unless Jordan comes...'*

ii) generally in questions:

-> What will you do **if** he doesn't come? *not: '..unless he doesn't come?'*

iii) when making reference to the best (or worst) characteristics of something or someone:

-> **If** it wasn't the best game of his career, it was definitely the most memorable. *not: 'Unless it was...'*

C) *Whether* and *if* are sometimes interchangeable. Note the two circumstances in which both can be used:

i) When we do not know the outcome of a scenario:

-> I'm not sure **whether** he will finish by 6pm. *or: I'm not sure if he will finish by 6pm.*

ii) In *whether/if...or...or...constructions*:

-> I'd like to know **whether** the rumor is true **or** not. *or: I'd like to know if the rumor is true or not.*

Now, note the four circumstances in which *whether* (not *if*) should be used:

i) To present two alternatives (neither of which is a condition):

-> Let me know **whether** you are coming to the party. (the two alternatives are *coming* or *not coming* and I need to know the answer regardless of which one is chosen)

ii) After prepositions:

-> We need to discuss *about* **whether** the right decision has been made.

iii) Before to-infinitive verbs:

-> Mom is still considering **whether** *to let* me go abroad alone. *not: '..if to let me go abroad alone.'*

iv) In the pattern 'noun/adjective + as to whether..' meaning *about* or *concerning*:

-> There was some **confusion as to whether** the ball had actually crossed the line.

Also: *conflict, debate, discussion, doubt, question, speculation, uncertainty, concern, indifferent, undecided, unsure*

Note: -> Generally speaking, **whether** is preferred instead of **if** in the following circumstances:

i) after the verbs *advise, choose, consider, depend on, discuss, talk/think about*:

-> Modern medicine makes it possible for a couple to **choose whether** to have a baby.

ii) When *whether* starts a clause that is the sentence subject or complement:

-> **Whether** you stay a bit longer or leave is completely up to you.



Unit 62 – Exercises:

62.1 – Choose the correct answer for each sentence; either **if** or **unless**. (62-A/B)

- Students will not benefit **unless** their teachers understand their learning needs. a) unless b) if
- Will students be permitted to enroll **if** they want to attend online classes only? a) unless b) if
- _____ you see Michael tell him to call me when he has a chance. a) unless b) if
- Students should hire a tutor _____ their grades are falling. a) unless b) if
- The airport won't be forced to suspend flights _____ the storm brings heavy snow. a) unless b) if
- He wouldn't have survived _____ his dad hadn't been watching him on the beach. a) unless b) if
- I wouldn't have taken the bus _____ it had rained so much. a) unless b) if
- I wouldn't have bought these shoes _____ they were on sale. a) unless b) if
- Take an umbrella with you today. _____ it rained, you would get soaked. a) unless b) if

62.2 – Combine each of the following clauses while writing **if** or **unless** in the blank provided. (62-A/B)

- You are not going to catch your plane _____ you speak a bit more clearly.
- She will eventually find out the truth _____ the weather forecast suddenly changes.
- You won't find a position in this field _____ you don't apologize over what happened.
- You can be certain he's a good friend _____ you improve your credentials.
- Do you think that you would miss me _____ he never lets you down.
- He won't understand what you mean **unless** you hurry up and run to the gate!
- We're going to go camping tomorrow _____ you keep lying to her.
- I am not going to speak to you again _____ I decided to move abroad?

62.3 – Rewrite each sentence to mean the same by beginning with **unless**. (62-A/B)

- An animal will usually not attack if it does not feel threatened.
Unless **an animal feels threatened, it will usually not attack.**
- If they don't start saving now, they won't have enough money for a deposit on a house.
Unless _____.
- A pet cannot be admitted into the country if you do not have the proper documentation.
Unless _____.
- She wouldn't have found a job if she hadn't moved to London.
Unless _____.
- The CEO wouldn't cancel such an important meeting if he wasn't sick.
Unless _____.

62.4 – Complete the sentences with **whether** or **if**. If both **whether** and **if** are possible, you may write **if** to create a more casual mood. (62-C)

- I cannot decide **whether** to buy this suit today.
- Tom asked Sandra **if** she'd like to go out for coffee sometime.
- Please let me know _____ you'll be coming to the wedding on the 25th. I need to know.
- Paul might come. It just depends on _____ he has the car or not.
- We're still not sure _____ we're going to relocate to a new office.
- _____ you decide to buy a cake for the party or make it yourself is up to you!
- There was some debate as to _____ the new vacation policy would truly benefit the employees.
- _____ she gets an 'A' on her final exam or not, she'll know that she did her best to prepare.
- No, I'm not sure _____ I have time to drop by the supermarket today.
- The cost doesn't change _____ you travel by bus or train.
- Let's discuss about _____ the kids are old enough to have a smartphone yet.
- We still have to consider _____ to buy a house or continue renting.